

Dudgeon. "She's a chum of mine and she knows how I feel about you!"

"She does!" exclaimed Rose in blank surprise.

"Yes, and she stands by me. But she knows how to keep a secret."

"I'm afraid there won't be any to keep," murmured the girl disconsolately. "No, Bert, no. I couldn't do it!"

At this juncture the passionate protest and broken, interrupted words cannot be intelligibly expressed.

The day of the dance arrived. It was an event in the millionaire colony, and Rose Alken examined with dismay the unfinished gown which should have gone to Miss Cursley the day before. Two of her best hands had been laid off by illness, there was a great deal of embroidery and fine work to be done on the gown and she was anxiously trying to finish it herself. The Cursleys had gone up to town rather early this season and Grace was one of a week-end party at the Dudgeons. Rose had just asked apprentice to wait to take the parcel to the house when the telephone began to ring. It was Miss Cursley inquiring about the dress.

"Yes, I'll have it there by 8," promised Rose.

"Do please bring it yourself, so if anything's wrong you can fix it," came through the phone.

Rose, feeling that wild horses couldn't under any other circumstances have dragged her to that house, was forced to promise.

Promptly at 8 o'clock she was admitted to Miss Cursley's room.

"It's just dear of you to come," she smiled, dismissing the hairdresser. "But no one will see you. Things don't begin until about 10, you know."

Miss Cursley exclaimed delightedly over the gown as she put it on.

Rose found alterations to make, in fact, more than she had expected. She worked busily, but it was getting near 10 when she had finished.

"Please put it on yourself," implored Grace. "I want to see it on a living model."

She was in a kimono, snugly encoined among cushions, and declared she was too tired to move.

"Besides," she added, "I want it to be just right, so it can be a good 'ad' for you."

"Stunning!" exclaimed Miss Cursley. "And it just suits you!"

Rose began to undo the fastenings, when suddenly there was a rush of feet through the hall and the cry of fire. Both girls sprang to the door to be greeted by stifling smoke as they ran out. Rose was for going back and closing the door, but the other excitedly dragged her toward the stairway. A mad rush of panic-stricken guests behind her swept her from her feet. At that instant she felt a strong arm lifting her back to the landing. She looked up to see an elderly gentleman, whom she at once recognized as the master of the house, quieting the guests in firm, authoritative tones. There was not the slightest danger. Something had burned up in the kitchen, that was all. In his excitement he was oblivious to the fact that he was still holding tightly to the young lady he had rescued, in spite of her futile efforts to wriggle away. He now apologized, saying he hoped to still further smooth out matters down in the ball-room.

Rose murmured something about not being able to stay very long.

"Then I must have the first dance," he insisted. "You owe me that, you know, for saving you a fall."

The admiring glance with which this was accompanied made Rose promise, and she fled in confusion to Miss Cursley's room.

Once inside she sank down laughing, and told her the whole story.

"Of course, now he'll be sure I'm a villain, because I can't keep my promise."

"Oh, but you must!" said the other.

"Must!" echoed Rose, blankly.